



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$3 Million to City of Springfield for Infrastructure Repairs in Forest Park

Funding Will Repair Swan Pond Culvert in Forest Park

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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**SPRINGFIELD** — At an event in Forest Park, the Baker-Polito Administration today awarded \$3 million to the City of Springfield for engineering, design and repairs to the Swan Pond Culvert in Forest Pond. The

funding, awarded from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' capital budget, will improve the construction and resilience of the 130-year-old culvert while ensuring continued public access and environmental protection.

"The Commonwealth's environmental infrastructure is a priority for our administration and the project in Springfield's Forest Park is an excellent opportunity to ensure the protection of this important environment," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "Constructed over a century ago, the culvert in Forest Park is critical to numerous ecosystems, and our administration is proud to partner with the City of Springfield to provide the funding necessary to find a permanent solution for a beautiful Western Massachusetts asset."

"The City of Springfield has been an excellent partner in our shared goal of protecting the environment through safe and reliable infrastructure," **said Lieutenant Governor Polito**. "I commend Mayor Sarno and the City for prioritizing this project in order to provide residents with the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Forest Park for years to come."

The culvert, located in one of the largest, urban parks in the United States, had previously suffered partial collapse and was in need of significant infrastructural repairs. Through the work of the City of Springfield, along with the Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreation Management, a plan was devised to replace the existing culvert, and reconstruct an engineered embankment. The project will excavate the embankment soils, remove and replace the culvert, restore portions of Swan Pond through the removal of dead and dying vegetation, and plant trees and shrubs in areas surrounding Swan Pond.

"Culverts play a crucial role in the survival of ecosystems, and the repairs to take place in Forest Park will protect Swan Pond and the surrounding habitat," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "Forest Park is a tremendous natural resource within Springfield, and I look forward to continuing our work with the City of Springfield to provide outdoor opportunities for residents while protecting critical environmental resources."

Funding for the project was made possible through the 2014 Environmental Bond bill which authorized the expenditure of \$3 million to improve Forest Park roadways, and repair applicable erosion.

"I am grateful to Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito for their swift action in allocating the funds necessary to restore the main entrance to Forest Park – Western Massachusetts' crown jewel," **said Springfield Mayor Dominic Sarno**. "The Governor and Lieutenant Governor identified this repair project as a top priority with the EEA when I made the initial call to them in August. They reassured me they would find funding to repair the dam and culvert. Today, I am very pleased to announce they are providing the resources to ensure the restoration of Forest Park's Main Greeting Road so that the thousands of annual visitors to Forest Park will have a scenic and accessible entrance to the park. The city is ready to execute an agreement with the Commonwealth to ensure that the design and

bidding of this project can commence. Due to the age of the conduit and its severe deficiencies, the release of these funds allows the city to take immediate action to initiate design and bid the project over the winter. I take great pride in the partnership and work that has been accomplished in our city under the leadership of Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito.”

“Forest Park is a gem for the City of Springfield and all of Western Massachusetts,” **said State Senator Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow)**. “I’m glad that the Commonwealth is working with the City on these needed repairs to the park’s Swan Pond culvert to preserve its ecosystems and ensure that the park remains a beautiful refuge for all our residents to enjoy — including my own two young children.”

“Forest Park is an essential landmark in the City of Springfield, and these repairs illustrate the State’s commitment to the environment and ensure that our families have a serene place to convene, enjoy and interact with nature,” **said State Representative Carlos Gonzalez (D-Springfield)**.

Under the funding agreement between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the City of Springfield, work is to be completed by June 30, 2019.

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### Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs →

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